Volume 31, No. 1, January 1999

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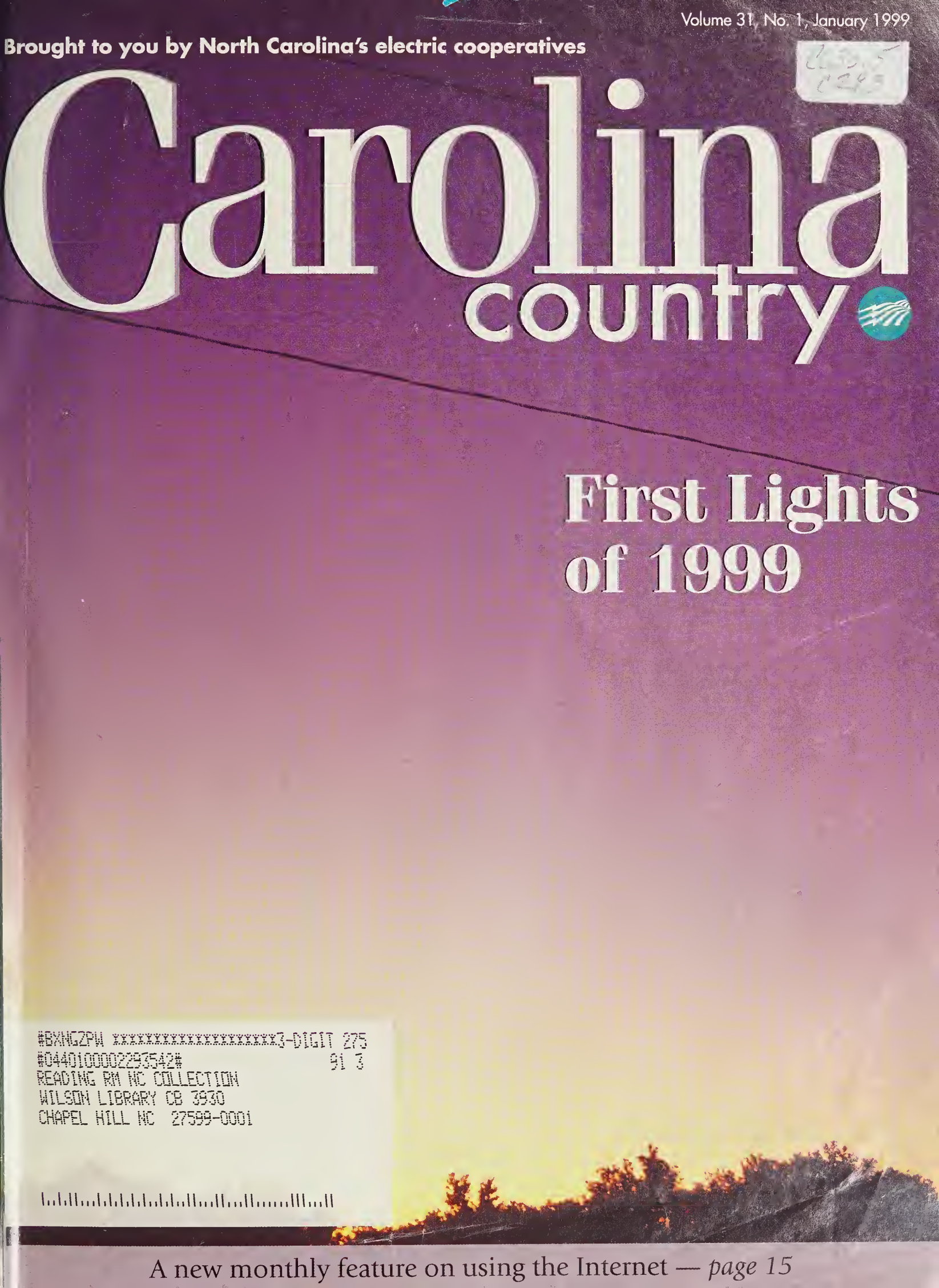

A new monthly feature on using the Internet — *page 15*

"STOP PAYING FOR STUFF THAT YOU CAN GET FOR FREE!"

FREE STUFF FOR SENIORS

(By Frank K. Wood)

FC&A, a Peachtree City, Georgia, publisher, announced the release of a new book for the general public, Matthew Lesko's, *"Free Stuff For Seniors."*

Don't pay another penny for things that you can get for free!

For years, big corporations and fat cat insiders have lived high on the hog, thanks to the government giveaways paid for with your tax dollars! Here's your chance to get even.

Let me show you how to become the ultimate insider ... then you, too, can get thousands of dollars in government goodies.

Every year, the government allocates millions of dollars for programs designed to benefit people over 50. Free prescription drugs, discount travel opportunities, cars, computers, even real estate — all at giveaway prices.

Literally thousands of programs offering every kind of grant, benefit, goodie, discount and freebie imaginable. But before I tell you how to get your share of this benefit bonanza, let me make one thing abundantly clear right at the start: these are not handouts, they are programs that have been bought and paid for with your tax dollars!

"Free Stuff For Seniors" will help you cash in on your years of paying taxes and put your earnings to work for you!

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Matthew Lesko — Mr. Info"

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"ROACHES!"

I HAD THEM BY THE HUNDREDS, BUT NOW I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE ROACH.

(By J. Robson)

Have you ever seen a roach run out of a bowl as you were about to put food in it? Well, I have. Just turn out the lights and an army of roaches would attack the whole house.

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Volume 31, No. 1, January 1999

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Official Publication of
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Corolino Country ® is published by the North Corolino Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Periodicols postoge poid ot Roleigh, N.C., ond additionol moiling offices. Editoriol offices: 3400 Sumner Blvd., Roleigh, N.C. 27616. Phone: (800) 662-8835, ext. 3062. Corolino Country is o registered trodemork of the North Corolino Association of Electric Cooperotives, Inc.

Postmoster: Send form 3579 to P.O. Box 27306, Roleigh, N.C. 27611.

Individuol subscriptions, $8 per yeor. $20 outside U.S.A.

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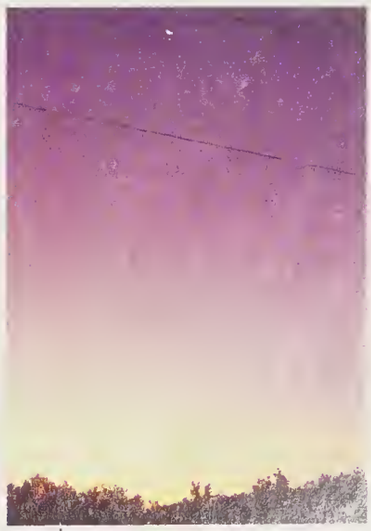

On the Cover
First light on mainland Dare County.
(photo by Michael E. C. Gery)

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How to get $50 to West Africa

Donna Garrett of Roanoke, Va. gets her Carolina Country each month from her sister, Ann Berry of Lexington, a member of EnergyUnited who enjoys the magazine and passes it on to her sister. One month recently, Donna taped a $50 bill inside the magazine and returned it to Ann with a note telling her to read a certain page. Donna's intention was to give that $50 to Ann and her husband as a donation for the religious work they do.

Meanwhile, Ann was preparing a package to send to her daughter Merri and son-in-law, who were working in Ivory Coast, West Africa. She put the Carolina Country magazine into that package, even though she remembered seeing a note about reading a certain page.

Shortly thereafter, an e-mail from Merri arrived. "Are you missing a $50 bill?" Merri asked. "I was surprised to find one taped in the Carolina Country magazine, but I definitely want a subscription to the magazine now. It would pay for itself in less than one issue!"

Ann, who hadn't known about the money in the magazine, wrote her sister, Donna. "If you aren't a sight – and so Biblical, not letting your left hand know what your right hand doeth! Today we got a letter from Africa thanking us for the package they had gotten. But she wanted to thank us especially for the $50 bill taped inside the Carolina Country magazine! I thought and thought but couldn't remember a thing about putting money in. Then it hit me. It came to mind that you had urged me to read a particular page – but when I went to read it, I had it already packed at the bottom of the box and I had it all done so tightly, I didn't think I should move anything. I said, 'The Lord must have wanted Merri to have it instead of me!' So thank you Donna."

Correction

Interstate 26 Project

The news about the film documentary "Corridors of Change" referred to the 8-mile construction of Interstate 26 in western North Carolina. The project affects Buncombe and Madison counties, not McDowell and Madison.

Turkey Treatment

Kindness for Kent

A while back I received a call from my vet. Some construction workers had seen a turkey fly off a truck on the way to the slaughterhouse. They took it to the vet, who kindly offered it to me.

The first time I saw Kent, his beautiful white feathers were crushed, broken and dirty. He smelled of disinfectant and had droppings ground into his skin. His little chopped beak looked too small for his head, and his legs didn't look big enough or strong enough to support his huge body. I brought him home.

I remember the look on his face the first time he walked on grass, felt the warm sun on his back, ate his first grape, had his first fresh green salad. And I remember how he'd coo and murmur when I sat down next to him to stroke his feathers. Most of all, I remember how I cried on the warm, sunny Sunday afternoon, when he put his head in my lap and closed his eyes for the last time.

Kent was the result of breeding done to produce huge birds as fast as possible. He was fed food full of chemicals and kept in a space so small he couldn't even walk around. Then, when the time was right (he was about 16 weeks old, and weighed 35 pounds), he was jammed into a crate so full of other turkeys that he couldn't move at all.

I know farming is a business, and I know some people chose to eat animals. That is their choice. All I would ask is that these poor creatures be treated with kindness before they are sacrificed. I would also ask that the next time you see one of these turkeys or chickens on the side of the road, pick it up. But, please, take care of it, or find someone who will give it a good home.

Diana Thomson
Linden

Turkeys deserve respect

Regarding the letter "Why did the turkey cross the road?" ["Commentary," November 1998], I fail to see how anyone could possibly watch an animal fall to the highway from a truck and not feel compassion and pity for that animal.

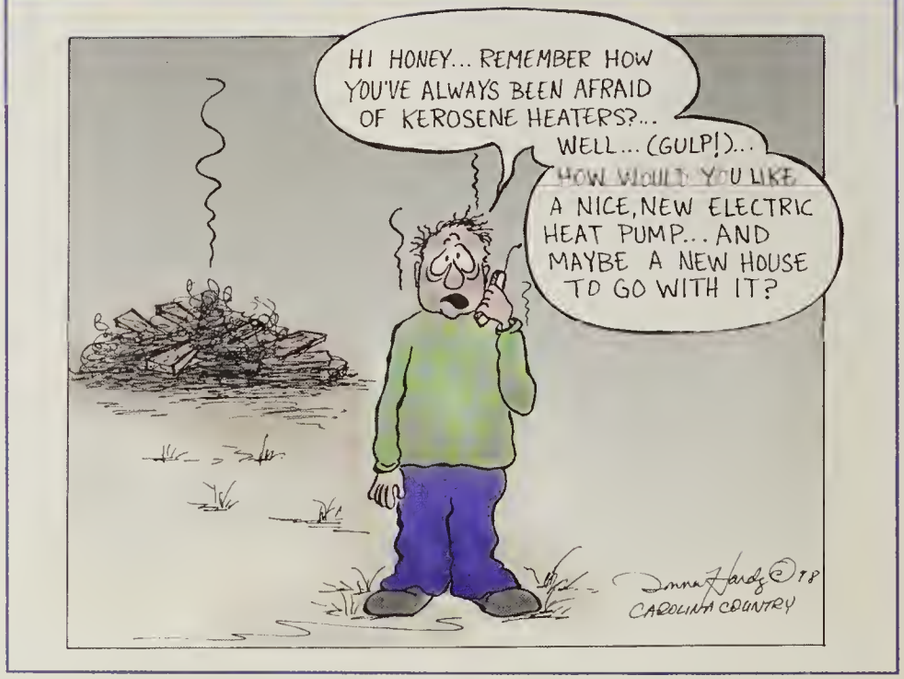
Yes, North Carolina is the largest grower of commercial turkeys, but I wonder how many of your readers are aware of the poor quality of life of today's factory-farmed turkeys? In the photo you printed, one can see that the turkeys have been debeaked. Often the ends of their toes are removed, too.

Today's turkeys have been genetically programmed to grow very large very fast. Their legs often give out because they cannot support the weight of the bird. They can no longer mate naturally. Females have to be artificially inseminated.

All birds were excluded from the 1958 Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which covers hoofed animals. I feel that turkeys (and all other animals) deserve our respect.

Kay Evans
Chocowinity

Light Lines by Donna Hardy


HI HONEY... REMEMBER HOW YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID OF KEROSENE HEATERS?...
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Donna Hardy ©'98
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Rep. Burr files a restructuring bill to begin debate

Burr represents the Winston-Salem area.

Congressman Richard Burr, a Republican from Winston-Salem, introduced an electric utility restructuring bill last fall as "a marker for a place where we can begin the debate again in 1999."

It's expected that Burr will reintroduce the legislation in early 1999 for the House Commerce Committee to consider.

Glenn English, CEO with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Assn., said Burr's 1998 bill contains some provisions that make sense.

"For example," English said, "Rep. Burr recognizes that states should determine what form a restructured electric industry takes, seeking not to impose a one-size-fits-all federal mandate, but to allow each state to proceed at its own pace and in the best interest of its residents and consumers."

In addition, English said, Burr recognized that residential and small business customers should have a local option for electrical services. Burr's approach would remove any impediment to cooperative utilities' full participation in the new marketplace, he said.

Burr is a member of the House Commerce Committee and its Sub-committee on Energy and Power, which is expected to consider utility restructuring in the 106th Congress.

Safety Q & A

Frequently asked safety questions about electricity

Question: Since the service line running from the pole to my house contains less voltage than a distribution line along the road, does that mean it's not as dangerous?

Answer: No. Co-op distribution lines along the road carry 7,200 or 14,000 volts, while the line to your house carries a 120/240-volt service. All power lines are dangerous. Each year, in fact, low-voltage lines kill more people than do high-voltage lines. Typical household current is 200 amps, and research shows that a person in contact with as few as .03 amps will stop breathing.

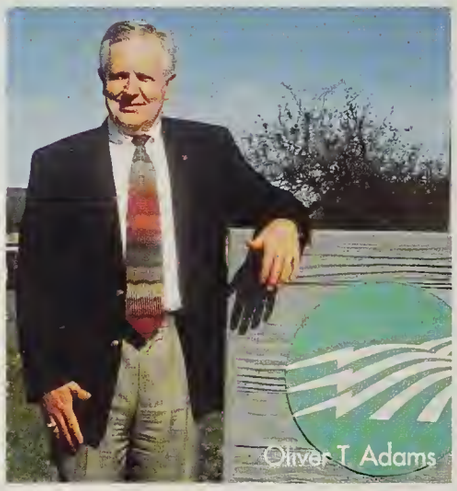
Soap, toothpaste and electricity

Amway Corp. has joined forces with Columbia Energy to sell electricity and natural gas to the average consumer in Georgia, if that state deregulates its electric utility industry.

The companies already plan to market Columbia Energy's natural gas and electricity to the nation's homeowners and small businesses. Beginning in Georgia, Amway distributors, who usually are individuals operating small, multi-level marketing businesses selling home and personal care products, will be able to sign consumers up with Columbia Energy's natural gas service. Electricity and other energy products and services could be added to the program as deregulation permits.

Columbia Energy, based in Reston, Va., is engaged in natural gas transmission, natural gas distribution, exploration for and production of oil and natural gas, and other energy operations

In Georgia, the new alliance would compete with 18 other marketers for 1.4 million customers.



Oliver T. Adams, the man next door

The "Falling Weather" forecast on a raw March day in 1993 turned out to be something of a joke.

Snow started on a Friday and fell through the night and next day and the next. But we were not unduly concerned. The Blue Ridge Electric lines were hot, and we had enough groceries for a normal shut-in situation. However, by the third day inside, we were wondering. Three feet of snow against the front storm door made it impossible to open. Same for the back. And six feet of drifted snow covered the garage doors downstairs. No way out.

On the third day we saw a man shoveling his way to our front door. He had managed to dig into our place enroute to a grocery store. His mission of mercy didn't end with rescuing us, though. He took our order for a bottle of milk and loaf of bread and left us with an eye out for the "falling weather" the forecaster said was coming.

Who was this "Good Samaritan" who dug us out? It was Oliver T. Adams — then in the Watauga office and now [director of customer service and sales] in the Blue Ridge Electric headquarters in Lenoir — our favorite next door neighbor.

E.D. Lewis
Boone

Study commission's schedule is delayed

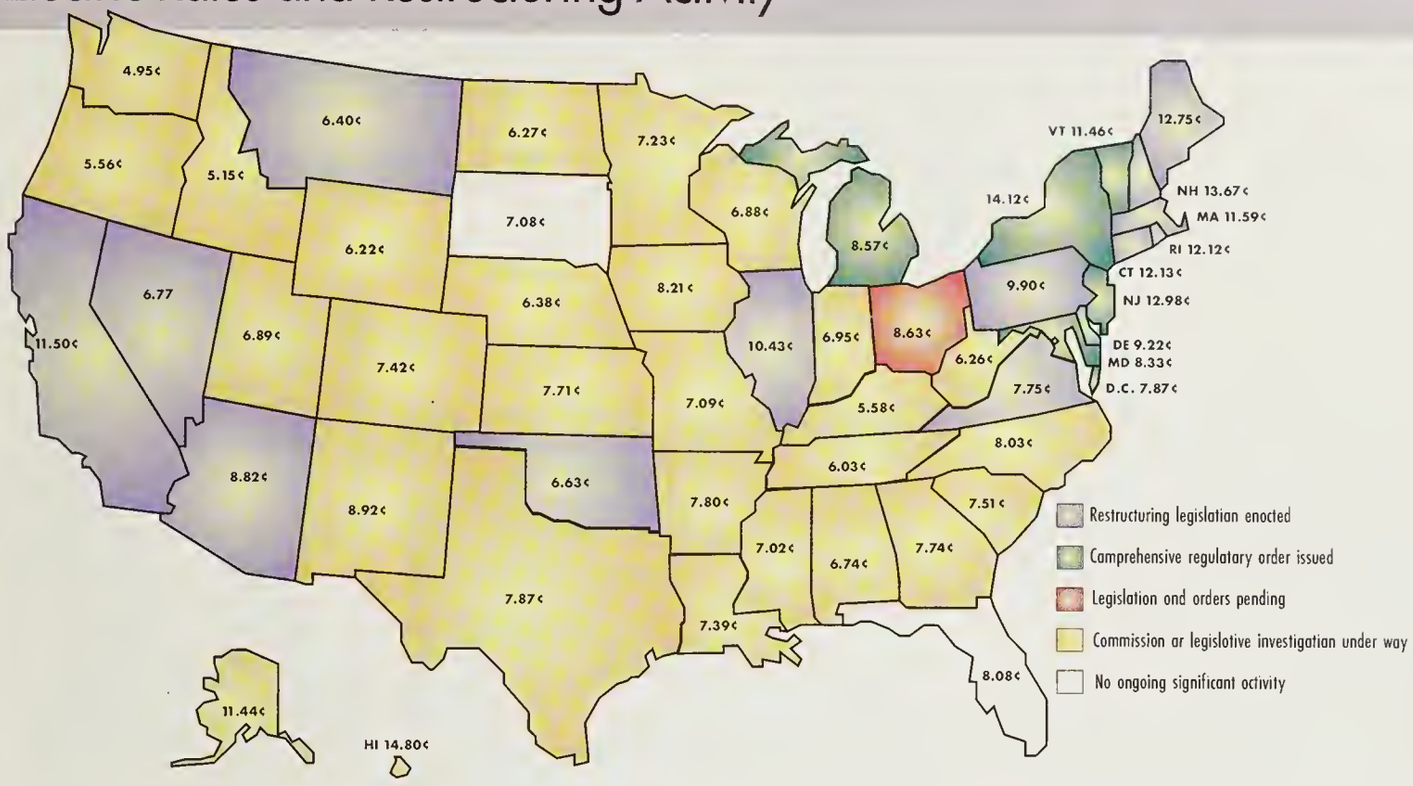
The state legislature's Study Commission on the Future of Electric Service in North Carolina probably won't have a proposal ready for the General Assembly until the spring of 2000, according to co-chairman Sen. David Hoyle of Gastonia.

In offering the prediction at the commission's meeting Nov. 10, Hoyle said he believed the panel's final report "would have to be presented to the short (legislative) session in year 2000, unless we had some great revelations and divine help in the next 90 days."

Meeting in November for the first time in seven months, the commission was delayed in completing its work because of the lengthy 1998 legislative session, which ended Oct. 30.

Although commissions of this kind are not allowed to meet while the legislature is in session, some members of the study commission want to ask the General Assembly for authority to meet during the 1999 session. Even if it does, chances are good it still would not have enough time to complete its studies and prepare a recommendation for the legislature before the start of the short session in 2000.

Electric Rates and Restructuring Activity



A nationwide look at average residential electric rates (1997) and the status of electric utility restructuring activity as of November 1998. Residential rates of all electric utilities remained unchanged in 1997 at an average 8.44 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration and National Rural Electric Cooperative Administration Strategic Analysis.

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organ donation

By Renee Gannon

Brooke Phillips, forever generous.

Around noon on Aug. 10 last summer, Brooke Phillips grabbed her car keys, kissed her Mom goodbye and bounded out of the house to visit a few friends in the Asheboro area. It was raining outside, and Asheboro needed the rain. Most of the summer had been bone dry.

The following week, 18-year-old Brooke was to join the freshman class at Guilford College, where she wanted to study physical therapy. A pretty, popular blond at Asheboro Senior High School, Brooke enjoyed helping others and volunteered often for school and community projects. In 1996, she was one of two girls representing Randolph EMC on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

At 3 p.m. that August day, Brooke's mother answered the ringing telephone, expecting it to be Brooke. Brooke often called during the day and was due back home around 3:30 p.m. Instead, Brooke's mother (who goes by the name M.A.) heard the worst news a parent can get -- her daughter had been rushed to the hospital. Her car had hydroplaned over an embankment just a half mile from her friend's house. Brooke's brain stem had been sheared instantly in the crash.

By the time her parents, M.A. and Larry, and older brother, Brad, arrived at the hospital, Brooke was already on full life support.

Four days later, on Aug.14, the neurosurgeon informed the Phillipses that everything medically possible for Brooke had been done. On Aug. 16, Brooke died. But because of her foresight and generosity, others would live.

Brooke's family knew of her wish to be an organ and tissue donor. She told her parents about it when she received her driver's license. The family spoke with a representative of Carolina LifeCare in Winston-Salem about the donation process. They knew Brooke had made the right decision, which in turn made their decision easier. Her organs and tissues could help people who needed them.

In life, Brooke was an outgoing, fearless, charitable young woman. In death, she passed along the ultimate gift – the gift of life – to more than 50 people.

The gift of life

Brooke's parents discussed their daughter's gift publicly for the first time at a meeting of the North Carolina electric cooperatives' EMC Volunteers Committee in October. "We are proud to say that Miss Brooke Upchurch Phillips lives on," her mother said. "She loved life and grabbed life by the ears. She was a giver and has even given in death, just like she wanted. We know that she has definitely made a difference."

Brooke's father, Larry, said, "The difficult decision was already made for us. Brooke had decided to become an organ and tissue donor, and we respected that. Through it all, we learned what happens when you are an organ and tissue donor and how many people are affected. Brooke was a gift of life to us, she in turn gave the gift of life to others. And she may lead others to give the gift of life as well."

According to Sarah Springs, community affairs coordinator for Carolina Organ Procurement Agency (COPA) in Durham, many of those waiting for organs or tissue are hanging onto life by a thread. More than 2,000 North Carolinians and some 60,000 people nationwide are waiting.

Agencies and volunteers are needed to get the gift of life message out about organ and tissue donations. That is why the EMC Volunteers Committee chose organ donation as its statewide project for 1999.

"Organ donation has touched so many lives in the co-op family. And what a wonderful gift organ donation can be," says Barbara Terrill, statewide representative for the Volunteers Committee.

Becoming a donor

A person can become a donor three ways: indicate "yes" on your driver's license, sign and carry a donor card and, most important, express your wishes to your family. Signing a donor card will not affect the quality of medical care a potential donor receives. Patients can be considered candidates for donation only when declared legally dead.

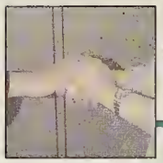
There is no cost to the donor's family, and the identity of the donor family is kept confidential. Donation takes only a matter of hours. Organ and tissue recoveries are conducted in the operating room under the direction of qualified surgical personnel. There is neither disfigurement nor delay in funeral arrangements because of a donation.

What can be donated? Organs that can be donated include heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, kidneys and small intestines. Tissues that can be donated include skin grafts (greatly needed for burn victims), veins, bone, corneas and heart valves. Donations are managed by the United Network of Organ Sharing. Patient matches are based solely on medical and logistical criteria.

How you can help

COPA of Durham, LifeShare of the Carolinas in Charlotte and Carolina LifeCare in Winston-Salem are organ procurement agencies sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for North Carolina.

To find out how you can become a donor or involved in the EMC Volunteers statewide project, contact Lois Goodwin, statewide volunteers coordinator for NCAEC, at (800) 662-8835, ext. 3067; or e-mail her at lois.goodwin@ncemcs.com



nothing
could be finer

My **Best** Friend

Fine friends seem to get better with age. But good friends are not necessarily old friends, as many of you pointed out in your stories for this month's theme, "the finest friend I ever had."

Good friends are those who are devoted to you, no matter what. Here are some examples, selected from more than 200 terrific ones we received.

Next month, it's "the finest car I ever knew." (Deadline was Dec. 15.) See page 14 for details about future themes. — MG

Still By My Side

In April of 1995 I had a motorcycle accident that left me paralyzed from the chest down. I spent the following five months in Duke hospital trying to learn to live life as a paraplegic.

Over those many months at Duke, one friend kept coming to see me. His name is Reggie Womack. Reggie and I worked together as power plant mechanics for Carolina Power & Light for many years. I considered Reggie a friend, but I never envisioned what a friend he would prove himself to be.

Reggie is a quiet, soft spoken, honest individual. Our relationship had always been one of mutual respect. So when Reggie would talk to me and tell me that I could still do something with my life, I would listen and want to believe him.

When I came home from the hospital, it was Reggie who came by or called almost every week to encourage me to rebuild my shattered life. The belief he and my family had in me helped me to see that I wasn't a "cripple." I was a man with a lot more living to do!

In April of 1997 accommodations were made that allowed me to return to work with CP&L as a storekeeper at the Roxboro Power Plant. Once again Reggie and I are working together, though not side by side as we once did. Yet today we are closer friends than we were ever before.

Steve Chandler
Roxboro
Piedmont EMC

Oh, Kay!

Since second grade Kay has been my friend. If I needed her in the middle of the night I could call and she'd come, no questions asked. And I'd do the same for her.

Our friendship has spanned 35 years and survived many ups and downs. Like when I was 16, a boy named Benny visited my brother and we were introduced. He asked if he could call me, and I said yes. Later, Benny called. Just when he was going to ask me out, Kay came on the line. A mile away, she was monitoring the party-line we shared and knew I had a call. She listened in, and at the first opportunity took over the conversation. I never got to go out with Benny—our romance was nipped in the bud. She took over and not only dated him but ended up marrying him. She still owes me for that one, and I'm here to tell you, I won't let her forget it either.

Kay and I did everything together—like attending church and school, losing our teeth and getting new ones, nailbiting, hide and seek, playing baseball in the pasture, riding truck wheels with my brothers, learning to ride a bicycle, doing the hoola-hoop, dressing up for Halloween, climbing trees, hunting chinquapins, picking blackberries, flying kites, homework, playing cowboys and Indians, learning to cook, learning to drive a car, making molasses, taking pictures and the silly giggles. Together we discovered puberty, bobby socks, ponytails, make-up, boys, dating, kissing, duck tails, page boy haircuts, jitterbugging, box suppers, cake walking, television, Elvis Presley, high school graduation and drive-in movies.

Life has truly been a trip, and I'm so glad I had Kay to take it with me. Today, she's 52 and I'm 53, but when I look at her I don't see the age, I see the young girl she used to be, the friend who helped me become the person I am today.

Carol C. Winebarger
Traphill
Surry Yadkin EMC

Rick Best, Scotland County Deputy

My son is a sergeant with the police department. He suffered a near fatal gunshot wound on June 25th while on duty. Rick Best, who is Scotland County deputy, was also on duty that night. He came to assist and rode with my son in the rescue unit to Scotland Memorial Hospital.

The doctors got him stabilized enough to be airlifted to Duke Hospital. Rick went on behind him, leaving his job and his wife and two small kids. He would not leave until my son passed the most critical points.

The doctors wanted us to talk to our son so that maybe some of what we said would reach him and help him fight for his life. We were so distraught that it was hard for us to see him in the condition he was in and not be tearful. Rick would stand there with us and talk to him and tell him we were there and how much we loved him and wanted him to hang in there.

If I happened to be home or out of the room when the doctor came in, Rick would later explain everything in terms I could understand. Rick would also tell me what the equipment hooked up to him was for.

If I called the hospital and wasn't able to speak with anyone, I could call Rick, and he didn't quit calling until he reached someone.

Rick Best is truly a wonderful friend.

Hazel Bowen
Maxton
Lumbee River EMC

"Lucky's Best Friend": Lucky and Katie.

"Tired But Happy": Emma (left) and her sister Lucille.

Lucky's Best Friend

It was the morning after a heavy rain, and our dog Katie was acting as if she had something to tell us. Being too distracted to listen, we ignored her. Thirty minutes later, Katie was at the door with something at her feet. Thinking it was a dead mole like Katie often presents to us, Paul picked it up and it began to squeak. He took it into the house, dried it off, and discovered that Katie had brought home an infant kitten, no more that five or six days old.

The kitten's eyes were still closed, and his umbilical cord was still attached. Being the second infant kitten we have raised, we knew to equip his box with a heating pad for warmth, a ticking clock to resemble his mother's beating heart, and some stuffed animals to act as surrogate brothers and sisters. We also found the infant bottle for those feedings every three hours.

Except for feeding him, however, Katie assumed the role of momma. She licked him clean, carried him around in her mouth, protected him and slept with him. We named him Lucky. He is now the ninth member in our animal family of five dogs and four cats.

Judy Tobin
West Jefferson
Blue Ridge Electric

A Comfort Through the Years

I first met Elaine Gaddy at Anson High School in 1966. I met her at a time when I lost a good friend in an auto accident, and she was a great comfort during this very trying time.

Elaine proved to be the kind of person who you can always count own. Her genuine kindness, words of encouragement and gentle smile have been a comfort through our years of friendship. Elaine's compassion for the welfare of others led her to a career in nursing. As our friendship has matured over the years, I have witnessed Elaine make numerous personal sacrifices in order to assist others. When I lost my mother to cancer, Elaine was there with a warm smile and a gentle touch for reassurance. Our friendship has also shared many joyous occasions.

Elaine is a true friend that anyone would love to call their own. (And, by the way, on January 22, 1972, I married my best friend, Elaine.)

Johnny C. Thomas
Peachland
Pee Dee EMC

Tired But Happy

I had a stroke at 52 years old and had to quit work and driving. Since then, my sister Emma has taken me to the doctor and shopping. (My husband is dead and children all working.) I kept having transient attacks, but if I got sick or dizzy, all I had to do was call, and she'd leave her cooking, husband and anything else, and stay until I got better.

I had by-pass surgery in December of 1990. I knew my four girls were afraid. They got a room at a motel near Carolina Medical Center to be near. Emma left her family at that busy time to stay with them until I got out of ICU and into a room.

We have a good time together, too. We talk about our churches, our children and a lot of things that make us laugh.

We try to visit the nursing home every Tuesday. We love it. We try to work my doctor appointments so we can get them on the same days. Her husband, Lynn, is good about it. He either doesn't mind, or else he's glad to be rid of us for awhile.

Emma and I go to yard sales. I'm older than she is, and I always sit in the front and tell her how she ought to drive. We love to go out and see people. We eat breakfast at Burger King and come home tired but happy.

I know sometimes she has other things she'd rather do, but she's like the Boy's Town slogan, "He ain't heavy, he's my brother." Hers is: "She is heavy, but she's my sister, and we love each other."

If you ask how she is, she'll say "I'm blessed." But I think I'm the one who's blessed for having her.

Lucille Haywood
Rockingham
Pee Dee EMC

Golden Valley

The finest friends we ever had are the people in the little town of Golden Valley. I couldn't name all of them, because it would take up the whole book.

On October 9, 1997, my son was in a car accident. He was 11 years old, and he broke his neck in three places. It was a very hard time, but with all of our friends there with us, it helped. They brought us food and gave us money. They stood by our sides through it all. The doctor said he had never seen so many cards and letters and other things they all sent to his room. We think each and every one is special to us. We love them all for helping us get through our bad time.

Judy B. Hunt
Bostic
Rutherford EMC

My Bodyguard

On a warm spring afternoon, my father was told that the young police K-9 had pups and if he could get into her dog lot he could have first choice of a pup. My father succeeded at capturing the best friend a family could have.

Misty was seven-eighths German shepherd and one-eighth Doberman pinscher. She was never trained, but she had it in her blood to be the best "bodyguard" she could be.

I was born in June of 1977, and once I learned to walk, Misty was at my side every minute that I played out in the yard. She kept me from going in the road and kept me out of the woods.

My parents felt at ease knowing that Misty was my bodyguard. In June of 1981, my brother was born, so Misty was watching over two little "June Bugs."

When my brother and I started school, we would wait in the house until Misty barked to let us know that the bus was coming. She would lead us down the driveway to the bus and stick her head in as though to make sure everything was all right. As the bus door shut, Misty would bark to let the driver know that it was all right to go. When we would come home from school, Misty would meet us as we came down the bus steps and lead us to the safety of our mother.

This ol' gal worked hard to please her proud owners, and my parents rewarded Misty with fine meals and warm baths. She took her share of pain though, by taking bullets during two robberies and being hit by a car. In the fall of 1989, my father was heartbroken when he told us he found Misty in the woods. After 15 years she had peacefully passed away. I was 12 when Misty passed away, and now at 21 and I know I will always remember my K-9 friend.

Vickie Flynn
Morganton
Rutherford EMC

Send us your stories and photos. Earn $50.

Our series on "the finest" of North Carolina, written and photographed by our readers, became real popular during 1998. "What a great way to get to know other people across this state," one of you told us. So we decided to run it again in 1999.

When they choose a selection for publication each month, judges seem to like stories that are clearly expressed, from the heart, and full of North Carolina character. (Most of those we receive have some or all of these qualities, so choosing a few is difficult work.)

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Typed or e-mail, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
4. Include your name, mailing address, electric co-op, and phone number.
5. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. *(We will not return others.)*
6. We pay $50 for each submission published in this series.
7. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com

The 1999 Themes

March
My Advice for the U.S. Congress
(They represent you.)
Deadline: Jan. 15

April
The Funniest Story I Ever Heard
(The truer the better.)
Deadline: Feb. 15

May
The Finest North Carolina Road I've Ever Been Down
(Anywhere in the state.)
Deadline: March 15

June
The Finest North Carolina Music I Ever Heard
(What makes it so?)
Deadline: April 15

July
The Finest Safety Lesson I Ever Learned
(This can help others.)
Deadline: May 15

August-December themes to be published later

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Information on the Internet Often Bears a Double Check

Personal computing advice
by Reid Goldsborough

Did you know that TWA Flight 800, the commercial airliner that tragically crashed last summer off Long Island, was accidentally shot down by a U.S. Navy missile?

OK, this was just a rumor that was circulating on the Internet last year. But some people believed it, including such respected authorities as Pierre Salinger, former ABC News correspondent and one-time press secretary to John F. Kennedy. Salinger embarrassed himself by announcing to the world that he had "indisputable" proof, only to have his proof quickly debunked.

The fact is, the Internet is chock full of rumors, gossip, hoaxes, exaggerations, falsehoods, ruses and scams. Though the Net can reveal useful, factual information that you'd be hard pressed to find elsewhere, it can also appear to be a gigantic electronic tabloid.

"Information on the Net has an aura of credibility that it may not warrant," says Joyce Flory, Ph.D., a Chicago-based coauthor of five books about the Internet.

Can you ever trust the Internet? Sure you can. You just need to apply critical thinking in evaluating the information and advice you come across. Here's a six-step approach to doing this.

1. Just as you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, don't judge a Web site by its appearance. Sure, if a Web site looks professional rather than slopped together, chances are greater that the information within it will be accurate and reliable. But looks can and do deceive, frequently. A flashy site can merely be a marketing front for quack health remedies or an illegal pyramid scheme.

2. Try to find out who's behind the information. If you're looking at a Web site, check if the author or creator is identified. See if there are links to a page listing professional credentials or affiliations. Be very skeptical if no authorship information is provided.

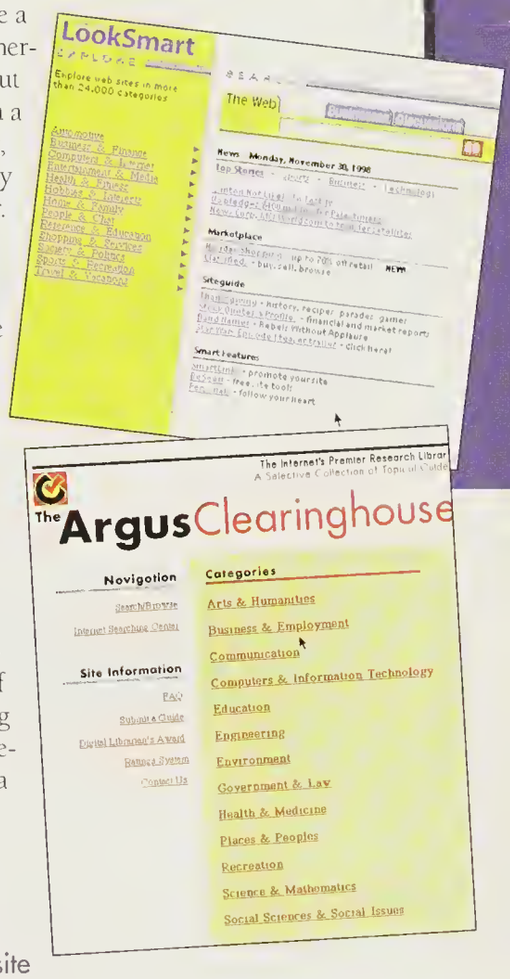
If you're looking at a message in a Usenet newsgroup or Internet mailing list, see if the author has included a signature — a short, often biographical, description that's automatically appended to the end of messages. Many people include their credentials in their signature or point to their home page where they provide biographical information.

3. Try to determine the reason the information was posted. Among those who create Web sites are publishing companies, professional and trade organizations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, educational institutions, individual researchers, political and advocacy groups and hobbyists.

Each has its own agenda, sometimes explicit, sometimes hidden. Unearth the agenda, and keep it in mind when evaluating the information presented.

Similarly, look behind and between the words posted in Usenet and mailing list discussions. Is the author trying to promote his own ends or be helpful? You can often do both, but not always. Someone posting inside information about a stock, for instance, probably has his own interests at heart, not yours.

4. Look for the date the information was created or modified. Unless you're doing historical research, current information is usually more valid and useful than older material. If the Web site doesn't provide a "Last updated" message or otherwise date its content, check out some of its links. If more than a couple are no longer working, the information at the site may no longer be up to date either.



5. Try to verify the same information elsewhere. This is particularly important if the information is at odds with your previous understanding or if you intend to use it for critical purposes such as an important health, family, or business decision.

Ideally, you should confirm the information with at least two other sources. Librarians and information scientists call this the "principle of triangulation of data." Spending a bit of time validating the material, through the Internet or at a local library, can be well worth the investment.

6. Try to find out how others feel about the reliability and professionalism of the Web site you're looking at. There are a number of review guides that offer evaluations of other sites. Some of these guides review thousands of sites, however, with some reviews being more substantive than others.

Here are three excellent, relatively new review guides on the Internet that you may not have heard of. *(Your search engine can find them.)*

- Argus Clearinghouse
- Mining Company
- Readers Digest's LookSmart

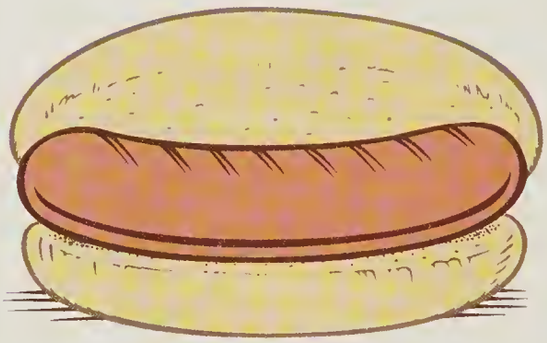
Bottom line: With any information you come across on the Net, the watchword is "Caveat lector" — Let the reader beware.

If you'd like to delve further into the issue of information credibility on the Internet, there are Web sites out there that let you do just that. Here are four good ones. *(Your search engine can find them.)*

- Evaluating Internet Information
- Evaluating Quality on the Net
- Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources
- Internet Source Validation Project

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or http://members.home.net/reidgold. His column will be a regular feature in Carolina Country.

SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR THE Uncivilized



Outdoorsmen sometimes find themselves wandering into strange environs, harsh and uncomfortable to their weathered souls. The usual landmarks are gone. Panic wells up in their throats, and only choking fear holds it in check. These places have many names, most unsuited for children's ears, but generally they are referred to as High-Class Joints.

Fine restaurants lure many an outdoorsman and spouse on special occasions, usually for a Christmas dinner, Mother's Day, or an anniversary. Yet the minute he steps inside, an outdoorsman knows his every move is being watched and judged. Just one false step, one wrong move, and the critics will be on him like a pack of jackals.

But it doesn't have to be that way for you. To venture into a high-class joint and emerge unscathed, you only need to know two things.

First, you have to be able to recognize a high-class joint. Second, you must know the rules of etiquette that apply within these premises.

Let's start with the first one. To help you distinguish between types of restaurants, let's look at Pierre's Pointe, a high-class joint, and Dewey's Duck-Inn, a low-class joint.

One of the first indicators is the parking lot out front. Vehicles say a lot about a restaurant. I once saw an eating place surrounded by European sports cars. One had a bumper sticker that read, "This is Mercedes country – on a clear night you can hear a Volvo depreciate."

Bet your Browning boots that was a high-class joint.

High-class joints also tend to be secluded. They are always in alcoves, or behind, above, or below other buildings and harder to find than a hook dropped on a night-fishing trip. Don't expect a neon sign that blinks, "EAT!"

Another clue is what happens in the parking lot. Usually, some youngster in a black jacket will greet you, then take your keys and your car. At a high-class joint like Pierre's, you'll get the car back.

Inside the restaurant, the first thing you'll see is that you can't see. That's the part that still confuses me. If the food's good, you eat it in the dark. In Dewey's Duck-Inn, you eat burgers and Rolaids under a spotlight. It should be the other way around.

After you're immersed in darkness, Pierre himself will scare you witless by stepping up to greet you when you least expect it. That's all Pierre does. A clerk will then check your reservation, and if you have one, show you to your seat. A good rule of thumb is that in a low-class joint, the most direction you'll ever get is "Park it over there!"

Pierre also has more employees than customers. Figure it takes one guide, four waiters, a water boy, one table sweeper, two cooks, and three dishwashers just to fix your dinner. That also explains why the food costs so much.

On a table at Pierre's, there will be enough utensils to serve Ulysses' army. Three forks, two spoons, two knives, a glass of water, one for wine, a cup for coffee, one plate for looks (since they always put your food on another one in the kitchen), and a saucer for butter are standard fare. At Dewey's, you would expect to eat from a paper plate, and

BY JIM MIZE

drink from a Mason jar, and when you sit down the last guy's food will still be on the table.

Both high-class and low-class joints have lots of food on the menus. But at Dewey's, you actually see food on the menu.

Old food dominates Pierre's menu and sells at a premium, whereas Dewey has to mark down his old food and run it on special. Twenty-year-old wines and month-old steaks are apparently worth more than day-old chili.

Not only does Pierre keep track of his food's age, but he's mighty proud of its birthplace, too. Gulf shrimp, Dover sole, and Maine lobster are a few examples. At Dewey's most patrons are afraid to learn where the food's been and are mostly interested in where it's going.

One trick of Pierre's is renaming food so that it sounds better. Pierre's squab is really pigeon, his Cornish hen is just a little chicken, and his blackened mahi-mahi is fish. Any fish that gets blackened at Dewey's is an accident.

Fire can be an important indicator of restaurant quality. In a high-class place, such as Pierre's, they set fire to your food at the table. If, however, they set fire to your food in the kitchen, then you're at Dewey's. This latter instance is what Dewey and others in the trade refer to as the Poor Man's Microwave.

Pierre also likes to serve food raw. After charging you the way he does, you would think Pierre could at least cook it. But no. Sushi, oysters on the half shell, and raw vegetables abound.

Finally, at Pierre's Pointe, your food arrives in shifts called courses. Maybe that's done to keep all his help busy shuffling back and forth. At Dewey's Duck-In, meals are designed by architects to fit on one plate and your check comes with the food.

Using these abundant signs, you should now be able to identify a high-class joint once you find it. The next trick is turning on the etiquette.

Five rules will get you through any dinner with ease.

First, never order ketchup in a high-class joint. This may sound difficult, but keep in mind, they don't serve french fries even in a French restaurant.

Second, remember tea is a high-class drink, hot not cold. If you have trouble drinking tea, try picking open the bag with your extra fork to let out a few grounds. Then it resembles weak camp coffee.

Third, talk about high-class stuff. For instance, the conversation should be dominated by topics such as horses, salmon, and foxes, not mules, carp, and possums.

Fourth, drink everything with your little finger extended. Don't ask me why.

Last of all, hand everybody money. You've got eight or nine people in this place trying to make a living on one meal. If you can't afford to hand out greenbacks at every turn, just tell them you're taking care of them on the master bill. Then if you don't actually take care of them, wait at least a year before going back. Waiters have longer memories than do elephants, and a wounded elephant is no match for a stiffed waiter.

Both high-class and low-class joints have lots of food on the menus. But at Dewey's, you actually see food on the menu.

Well-informed, you now qualify to be well-fed.

But you say it looks like a lot of effort to eat in a high-class joint? And it sounds a bit stuffy? And who can afford it more than once or twice in every generation?

All good points. Maybe that explains why Dewey pulls his bass boat with a Lincoln.

Jim Mize, who lives in South Carolina, has collected the best of his outdoor humor in a book titled "The Winter of Our Discount Tent," which was selected for an Excellence in Craft award by the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Copies are available for $18.95 plus shipping and handling by calling (800) 768-2500.

Maps of gold sites across the southeastern U.S. are available.

There's gold somewhere in them there hills!

Gold has been found in 34 North Carolina counties, plus South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Virginia – along a streak of sites running from Montgomery, Ala., to Washington, D.C. About 300 gold deposit sites can be found in North Carolina alone, from Clay and Swain counties in the west to Franklin, Nash and Halifax counties in the east.

Maps of North Carolina's gold sites, as well as the almost 1,000 other sites across the southeastern United States, are available from Charles Overbey of Big Ten, Inc. Overbey researched state and federal records for information to the sites in the South.

The maps tell how to pan for gold and where to look in a streambed. By knowing where gold has been found in the past, you can improve the odds of finding more gold today. All that is needed is a shovel, an old dishpan or a $5 gold pan, a magnifying glass, tweezers and a vial to place the gold in. A one-ounce nugget can bring $2,000 to $4,000 on the collector's market.

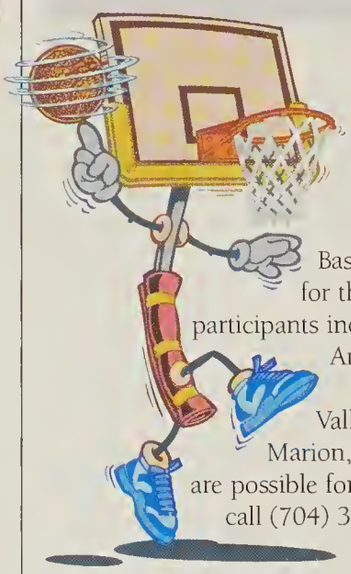
Though many large nuggets have been found in the past, you may find only a few specks, but it's a fun thing and an outdoor activity the family can enjoy throughout the year, says Overbey. No permit is needed for recreational panning in the general national forest areas as long as no machinery is used. Some people elect to pan at public rights-of-way where roads cross gold-bearing streams.

The maps also give gold history and facts and are in color on large-scale U.S.G.S. topographic map bases. The maps cost $12 plus $3 shipping for a single state or $36 plus $3 shipping for the five southeastern states set. Send a check or money order to: Big Ten, Inc., P.O. Box 321231, Cocoa Beach, FL 32932, or call (407) 783-4595. Also visit the Web site www.megabits.net/gold for more gold panning and historical information.

At State Fairgrounds

Southern Farm Show sets up in February

The 23rd annual Southern Farm Show will be held February 3-5 at the N.C. State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. The show features the most extensive selection of agricultural equipment, supplies and services in the Carolinas and Virginia. Only agricultural companies participate so there is little that farmers won't find useful. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call (800) 849-0248.



Sign up for the Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp

Registration is open for the Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp. Boys and girls ages 10-18 are eligible for the camp. Players are selected by invitation only. Past participants include: Michael Jordan, Tim Duncan, Grant Hill, Antawn Jamison, Vince Carter and Steve Wojciechowski. Camp locations are located in Raleigh, N.C., Center Valley, Penn., Atlanta, Ga., Bristol, Va., Delaware, Ohio, Marion, Ind. and Mobile, Ala. College basketball scholarships are possible for the most advanced players. For an evaluation form, call (704) 372-8610.

Food Assistance Program reaches needy families statewide

A coordinated effort between the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, county departments of Social Services and food relief agencies provides emergency food assistance to needy families in all 100 N.C. counties.

The state service coordinates the $3.1 million Emergency Food Assistance Program, which provides food items for qualified families in times of need. Food shelters, pantries and Social Services departments distribute food donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at the county level. Frozen and canned meats and vegetables, beans, dried fruit, pasta, peanut butter and juices are among the products.

"This program is a lifesaver for people who might be between jobs and have not started receiving food stamp benefits or for families who struggle to put food on the table despite receiving assistance," says state Agriculture Commissioner James Graham.

In order to be eligible for the program, families must be approved to receive food stamps or meet the income poverty guidelines set by the USDA. Contact Gary Gay at NCDA, (919) 575-4490.

Play golf and help lung disease research

For the 16th year, the American Lung Association of North Carolina, Eastern Area, offers the Golf Privilege Card Program. For $40, the card offers golfers more than 700 rounds of golf free or at a reduced rate on 300 courses across North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Cardholders receive a booklet with participating course listings. The cardholder then presents the booklet at the course he or she wishes to play. The booklet is good for one year, Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1999. Contact the American Lung Association at (800) 849-5949.

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Vinegar Melts Away Pounds and Inches ... Without Any Diet Gimmicks.

Amazing And Ultimate Weapon Against Fat...

CANTON *(special)* - If you *seriously* want to lose weight and keep it off, take a look at vinegar.

It's true! Vinegar expert, Emily Thacker says in her new book that vinegar safely helps speed up metabolism to burn unwanted calories, pounds and ultimately inches from your problem areas.

...And if you struggle to keep your weight down, the good news is you can start today by washing away years of ugly unwanted fat buildup.

After years of research, the just published and only "Emily's Vinegar Diet" weight loss system is now available to help you melt pounds and excess inches.

True Stories From Vinegar Dieters:*

► **LOST 30 POUNDS!** "I dropped 30 pounds so fast it scared me!" -- J.G. of IL

► **IT WORKS!** "Vinegar... with each meal will help you lose weight." -- B.N. of MN

► **LOST 97 POUNDS!** "I went down to 183 from 280... I wouldn't trade... for all the money in this entire country." -- V.S. of MS

► **THINNER WAIST IN TWO WEEKS!** "Already lost 1 1/2 inches in my waist in only one and a half weeks. -- Z.L. of FL

**These are actual testimonials from vinegar users around the country. They wrote in freely and did not profit from their endorsement. Testimonials are atypical, your weight loss may be more or less.*

This is not a traditional diet plan. According to Emily, overweight people can now break away from constant "yo-yo" dieting.

And you will be amazed how well this program is designed to work.

Best of all you don't need to count calories, no strenuous exercises (just simple muscle toning), no dieting or ingesting harmful diet pills.

It's easy, safe, convenient and you don't have to starve yourself thin.

The secret? Food proportion, vinegar and thermogenesis - (process of your body burning fat to create energy). And Emily states, "it works!"

Doctors agree. Strict dieting does not work and is harmful to your body...

...and nearly all weight lost is soon regained.

Eating, speeding up your metabolic rate and digesting fat cells is the only way to be as thin and as healthy as you want to be.

How many times have you said...?

- "I'll just gain it back" -or-
- "I'm not as-attractive as I know I could be." -or-
- "I have nothing that fits me comfortably"

Well, you'll learn how a few daily "fat burning" vinegar cocktails, combined with your three nutritiously hearty meals a day (including desserts!) can effectively help you say "good-bye" to fat and dieting forever.

It's true! You'll look better, feel better have unbelievable energy.

Imagine the possibilities! The rewards of weight loss are endless.

You'll also know how vinegar can aid in lowering cholesterol, digest tough-to-eat foods, boost immune system, restore age-wasted muscles and more.

Cancer? Diabetes? High Blood pressure? Arthritis? Learn what foods you'll enjoy to help fight these diseases.

Always Tired? Find out how you'll gain strength, energy and vigor, to banish fatigue.

Learn to make countless low fat meals to help you enjoy weight loss.

BURN Away Years of FAT

- *NO* Pills!
- *NO* Dieting!
- *NO* Calorie Counting !
- *NO* More Unwanted Flab!

Water? Food Color? It's no joke. New research uncovers the importance of these for weight reduction and disease prevention.

In other words, you'll almost effortlessly be healthier, thinner and potentially live longer.

Don't wait! Why not send for Emily's Vinegar Diet Book today?

To receive and try your complete "Emily's Vinegar Diet Book" for 3 months without risk, simply write "Vinegar Diet" along with your name and address on a plain piece of paper. Mail it along with your remittance of only $19.95 plus $2 shipping and handling payable to: The Vinegar Diet, Dept. FD3327, 718 - 12th Street N.W., Box 24500, Canton, Ohio 44701.

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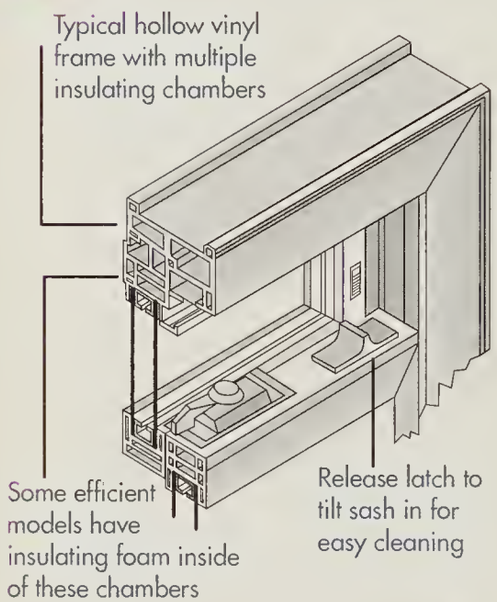
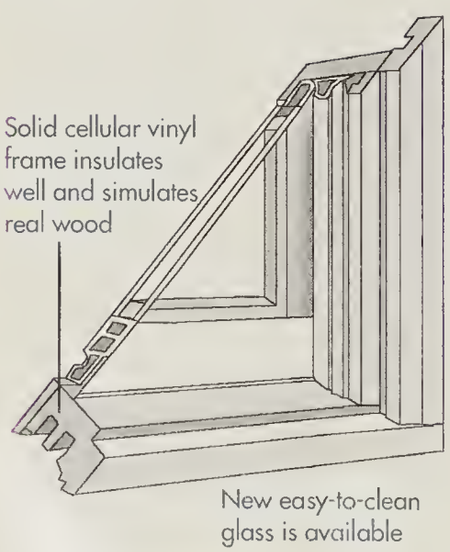
by James Dulley

Vinyl replacement windows offer easy maintenance, lower electric bill

Vinyl replacement windows can be a reasonably priced choice for almost any home. Since vinyl windows are custom made to fit each window opening, they are not difficult to install yourself.


Typical hollow vinyl frame with multiple insulating chambers
Some efficient models have insulating foam inside of these chambers
Release latch to tilt sash in for easy cleaning



Vinyl windows are efficient, durable, reasonably-priced

Hundreds of small, local vinyl window manufacturers exist, so be careful in choosing your window because quality varies greatly. Some of the highest-quality ones carry a lifetime warranty on the frame, glass, hardware, etc. Ten years ago, I installed 16 prototype foam-filled vinyl windows in my own home and have not had a single problem.

Some recent design improvements have made vinyl windows more attractive while still remaining maintenance-free.

Manufacturing technology has improved to the point that many vinyl windows have realistic-looking natural wood grain indoor surfaces. Some of these use baked-on finishes and others attach separate composite wood materials.

Although most people install replacement windows for comfort and convenience (some models even have special easy-clean glass), you should also notice a measurable reduction in your utility bills. The type of glass you select has the greatest impact on efficiency and energy savings.

The insulation value and airtightness of the frame also has a significant impact on the potential energy savings. Although a window appears to be mostly glass, a typical vinyl window frame accounts for 25 percent of the wall opening area. Vinyl is a good insulating frame material.

Noticed also is a reduction in outdoor noise, especially if you select the proper glass option. Glass with safe dense argon gas between the panes, instead of just air, helps block outdoor noise. Along with the reduced noise, dust and allergens, there will be less fading of your furniture and carpets.

Most vinyl replacement window designs use multi-chambered hollow extruded vinyl frame and window sash sections. An extrusion process is similar to how a cookie press works. Select vinyl windows with welded section corners. Welding produces a stronger and more durable joint than just using screws.

The many chambers inside the frame create multiple dead air spaces that provide excellent insulation R-value and strength. Several window manufacturers offer optional foam insulation filling inside these chambers. Although it adds a slight amount of strength, its primary advantage is higher R-value and outdoor noise reduction.

The newest vinyl window design, called Legend, uses a solid cellular foam main window frame instead of the typical hollow frame. It can be painted and has the look and feel of real grained wood. The remainder of the framing members uses single heavy-wall vinyl instead of multi-chambered members.

Casement replacement windows are becoming more popular due to their high efficiency and security. For convenience, choose a single-handle design with multi-point locks. Casement windows use compression seals when they close for an airtight seal.

Also consider secure tilt-turn windows that are popular in Europe. With the turn of a multi-position handle, the window sash either swings in (hinged on side like a casement) or tilts in (hinged on the bottom like a hopper). These are very airtight like casement windows with the same compression seals.

As a minimum, select dual-pane windows with a low-emissivity coating and argon gas in the gap. One of the most efficient (and expensive) glass options is Heat Mirror with plastic film stretched between the panes of glass. This stops almost all fading rays and is available in either hot or cold climate designs. Triple and quad-pane glass is usually used only in very cold areas.

Write for Utility Bills Update No. 689 – buyer's guide of the 20 highest-quality, most efficient vinyl window manufacturers, frame/glass options, styles, colors, features and glass selector data. Please include $3 and a business-size, self-addressed stamped envelope, and mail to: *James Dulley, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 54987, Cincinnati, OH 45254.* To instantly download the material or to read previous columns, see the Web site at www.dulley.com.

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MAKE 10 kinds of vinegar
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HELP your hens cope with the heat
START RIGHT with goats or rabbits
BUILD a nifty feeder for small cattle
DETERMINE the value of land
HEAT your home with wood *and* keep it clean
PATCH clothes quickly and easily
TAN sheepskins and goat hides
EARN MONEY without leaving home
GRAFT fruit trees—successfully
BUILD and use an outdoor oven
BUTCHER a pig and make bacon, ham and sausage
IMPROVE your soil
SMOKE poultry
CONTROL weeds by knowing their habits
FEED the worms your garbage
LEARN how to do everything right—the first time
LIVE THE GOOD LIFE

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PLEASE NOTE: Articles listed here have already appeared in print, and not all back issues are available — another good reason not to miss any more!

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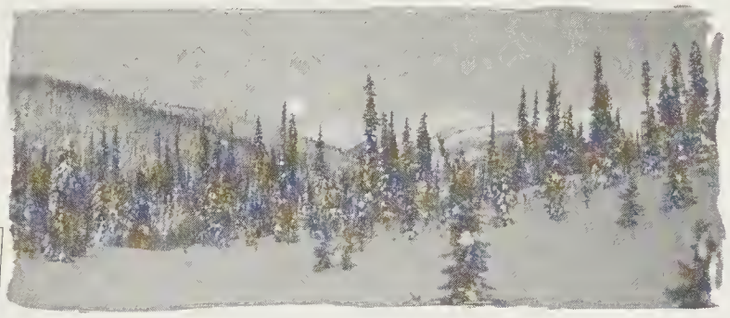


Read letters from "country neighbors" who live next door—and in the wilds of Alaska!

I'm hooked! Your magazine is a true gem! My only question is, where have you been all my life? The other magazines with "country" in the name have lots of pretty pictures, but no depth or purpose other than shallow entertainment. I'm *completely* mesmerized by each issue of COUNTRYSIDE I get, and cannot put it down! It's the most-read magazine I've *ever* had. I even read all the ads! Cover to cover, you're the best.—*Cheryl, Pa*

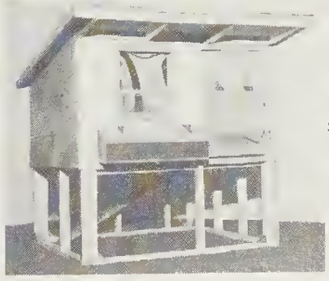
Really enjoy your magazine. It's like having a houseful of friendly neighbors in for the afternoon.

Being 73 years old, of course I lived through the big Depression. My folks had always practiced frugal ways, having been brought up that way, so it wasn't as hard for them as for some. I find many of the same money-saving hints we used then (and I still do) but also quite a number of new ones. We never get too old to learn.—*Ruth S., Idaho*

I continue to enjoy this magazine. Fascinating people, ideas, opinions, observations and hopes, as well as information and practical advice abound.—*Harland C., Maryland*

Thank you for 17 years of COUNTRYSIDE. We love it and the reasons for it!—*Mrs. G.H., NY*

Okay—you got me! And I'm glad! I sent for a sample issue, mailed back the invoice with "No thanks" written across it, and *then* read the magazine... cover to cover, every word, including the advertising, and decided I *need* this magazine. I had no idea there were so many people who felt the way I do.—*Carol S., Ohio*



Build a "sensible chicken house" in your backyard. Start by making a model like this.

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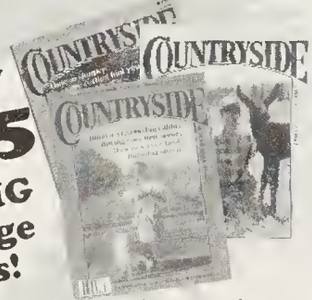

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And the winner is...

The winner of the November contest, "What Is the Value of Thanksgiving?" is Justin Nash of Monroe. His name was selected at random from among the 334 answers we received before the Nov. 25 deadline. We have sent him the $25 prize.

Most entries had the correct answer of 65.

T + H + A + N + K + S + G + I + V + I + N + G
1 + 8 + 3 + 7 + 6 + 5 + 9 + 4 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 9 = 65

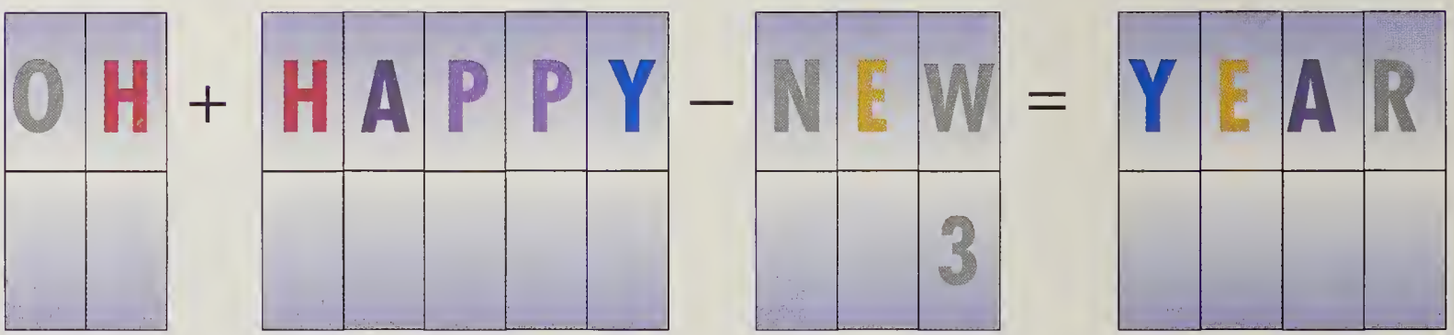
Here is a quick solution. The digits from 1 through 9 add up to 45. Therefore, regardless of the values given to the individual letters, THANKSGIV = 45. It is only necessary to find the value of the repeated letters (I, N and G). THIS (18) – HIT (13) = S (5).

SIGN (25) – S (5) = IGN (20) = ING (20).

THANKSGIV (45) + ING (20) = 65.

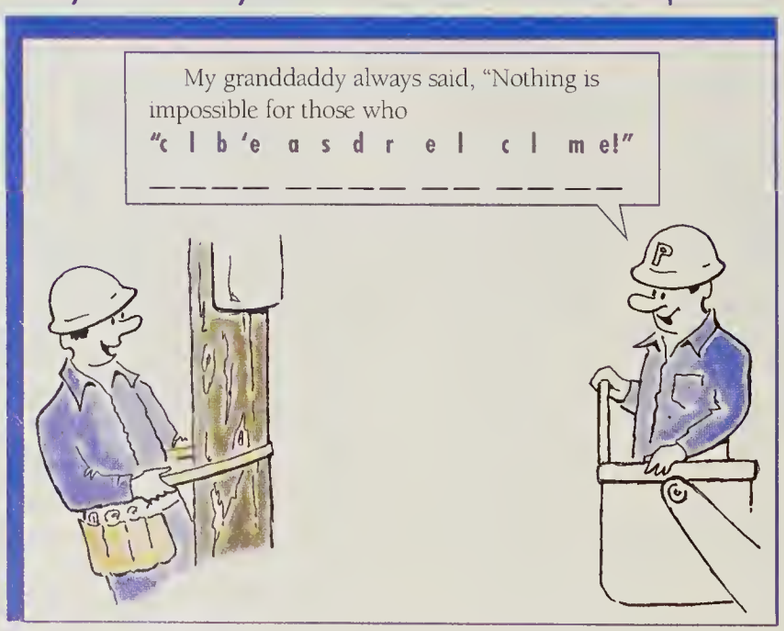
There are numerous other solutions to reach 65.

Domi-No.s



Can you replace the missing digits on the Domi-No.s? Repeated letters represent repeated digits. It's sum fun!

Percy P. Cassidy — Poles Apart



Use the capital letters below to fill in the blanks above.

ADEHINOTV means

s c r a m b l e d

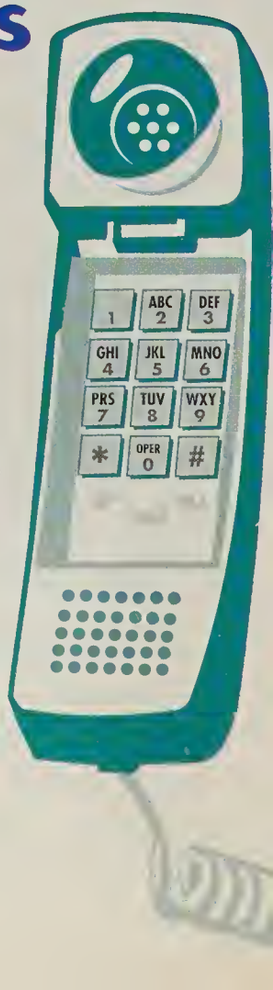
Phone-Etics

Everyone who loves puns knows that Samson died of

3 2 5 5 3 6
_ _ _ _ _ _

2 7 2 4 3 7
_ _ _ _ _ _

If you were to punch in the numbers above on your telephone pad, you would spell out the two missing words. Go figure!



Answers on page 29

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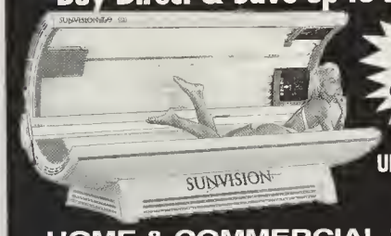

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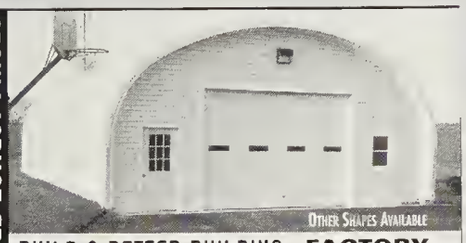

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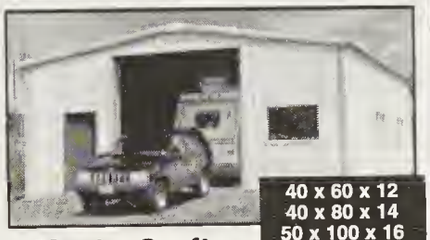

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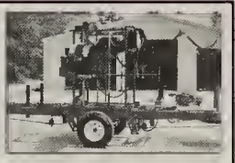

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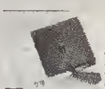

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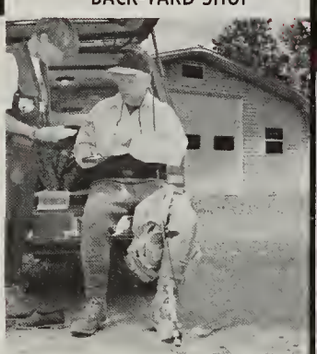

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Stevens Center, N.C. School of the Arts, 3 p.m. & 8 p.m.,
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Smokey Joe's Café
Jan. 14, Pembroke
Musical, Givens Performing Arts Center, (800) 367-0778

David Burgess Concert
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Lakeland Cultural Arts Center,
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Gospel Festival
Jan. 16, Littleton
Lakeland Cultural Arts Center,
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Wish Upon A Star
Jan. 16, Raleigh
Children astronomy show, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences,
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West End Chamber Ensemble
Jan. 16, Winston-Salem
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Astronomy Day
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Stomp
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Emma Gibbs Band Concert
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Duck Watching
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Moiseyev Dance Company
Jan. 26, Durham
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Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater Co.
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Kitchen Chemistry
Jan. 30, Raleigh
For kids, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, (919) 733-7450

Let My People Go
Jan. 30-31, Winston-Salem
Drama, Reynolda House, 5 p.m.,
Free, (336) 725-5325

To Kill A Mockingbird
Feb. 1, Winston-Salem
The Arts Council Theater,
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Halley's Comet
Feb. 1, Pembroke
Drama, Givens Performing Arts Center, (800) 367-0778

Southern Farm Show
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by Hank Smith

With the New Year upon us – and the 21st century only 12 months away – let's resolve to have more plants and cleaner communities.

When planning your cut flower garden, think about your interior wall pictures and furniture fabric colorings. Select annuals and perennials whose blooms will harmonize with or accent rooms.

Trees and shrubs

Prune any trees or shrubs that need dead or diseased wood removed: crepe myrtle, althea, eleagnus, vitex, buddleia and oleander growing in the coastal areas. Winter pruning continues until mid-February.

Give top priority to planting trees and shrubs while they are in winter dormancy. All types of deciduous and evergreen plants can go in the ground now. If you seek variety, try hollies. Different types range in height from one to 60 feet, with foliage varying from broad and showy to fine and small-textured, and berries that are red, black or yellow. Select plants adapted to your area and climate. Community and home yard plantings have failed because plants were brought in from other sections of the country and did not adapt to new growing conditions.

Simple does it

A common fault in landscape planning is using too many different kinds of plants. Repeat plants to lend harmony and unity over the entire area. Avoid too many different types and scattered plants and beds. Maintenance will be less of a chore. A collection of desired plant species may be used in out-of-the-way locations, space permitting. This is often a good source of cutting material for use indoors. Areas adjacent to the house should not be overdone. A collection of many different shapes, sizes, colors, textures and forms can be confusing and label the yard gaudy.

January tips

1. Clean up and burn all twigs and litter beneath pecan trees to prevent twig girder damage.
2. Place a 3- to 4-inch mulch around plants to help ensure that root systems do not freeze during low temperatures. Suggested mulches include pine straw, pine bark or broadleaves.
3. If not already done, test soil. Spread lime on lawn now if needed.
4. Work organic materials such as compost, peat or leaves into unplanted beds, including vegetable garden.
5. Prune fruit trees and grape vines now until late February.
6. Scale infestation on deciduous plants usually is controlled with a dormant oil emulsion, if you are not opposed to chemical controls. For scale infestation on evergreens, wait until temperature is above freezing but below 85 degrees, then apply a lightweight summer oil emulsion.
7. Keep in mind that newly set plants need watering during dry periods, even in winter.
8. Azaleas often look bad this time of year. But feeding the plants too early causes shedding of flower buds. Wait until flowering to fertilize. Fertilizing now can cause tender young growth during mild periods as well, growth that easily could be frozen.
9. Plan to locate tomatoes in a new area, to help them escape soilborne diseases that overwinter in the soil.
10. Parrafin-dippled roses should be shaded after planting to reduce damage from hot sun on mild days. A few branches from evergreen trees or shrubs, or burlap on a simple frame lend good protection.
11. Often dahlia tubers and gladiolus corms are attacked by rot while in storage. Check. If rot is present, throw the tubers and corms out.
12. Cut back one-half to one-third of new growth on crepe myrtle and butterfly bush to force new growth and heavier bloom.

Shady shrubs

Only a limited number of shrubs thrive in shade. Average success can be expected from abelia (5-8 feet). Kurume azaleas grow 4 to 6 feet and thrive on a few hours of sun daily. Yaupon holly (15-20 feet) will grow in shady spots, although it prefers sunshine. Mahonia (hollygrape) will grow in shady locations, reaching a height of 3 to 4 feet. Acuba grows 4 to 5 feet and prefers shade, although it often does well with morning sun. Variety nana reaches about 2 feet in height.

Consider background

Careful selection should be used in choosing and locating flowering trees and shrubs. Such are excellent to view from kitchens, great rooms and dens. Often they can be combined with background evergreens to hide undesirable views. Many have no foliage when blooms form and are more effective with a backup of evergreens, perhaps the roof of a neighbor's house, or the overhead sky. Do not locate too close to buildings where they could suffer from too much shade or cause problems with leaf fall in gutters and staining the building.

Flowering trees are affective when grown in natural unpruned form. Good choices include dogwood, crepe myrtle, redbud, flowering peach, Bradford pear, the spireas, forsythia, camellia, azalea, deutzia, rhododendron, flowering quince, althea and mallow hibiscus. In addition, fruit trees such as apples, pears and cherries are effective and give the bonus of edible enjoyment.

Boxwood and snow

Should weather forecast be for heavy snow, binding limbs together can protect boxwood plants. Use rope to encircle plants, securing branches. This lessens the chance that the weight of ice and snow will snap branches or leave branches open. Light snows can be pushed off plants with a broom.

Turn a leaf

Examine euonymus and camellia leaves by turning over a new leaf (even an older one) to look for signs of scales — white and brown specks. Spraying every 10 days to two weeks with a dormant oil spray can control the insect. Spray when temperature is between 40 and 85 degrees. Do not apply within 24 hours of a freeze. Check with your garden center for proper spray control if houseplants develop scale. Spider mites and mealy bugs can be removed with a cotton swab dipped in a mixture of household detergent and water, or swish foliage in the solution. Rinse leaves.

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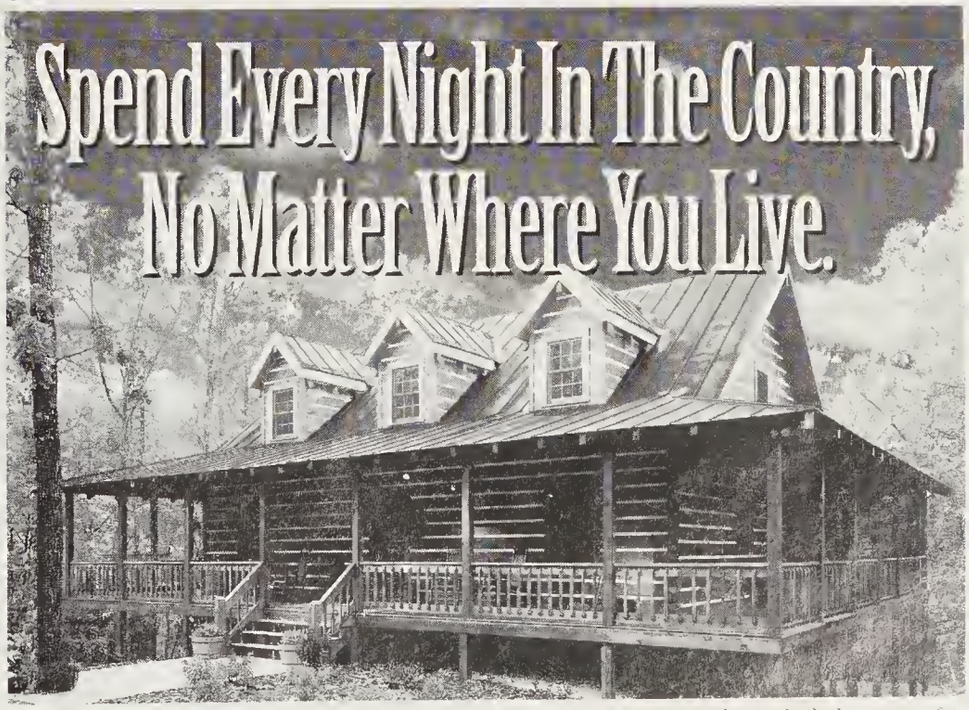

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Oysters, unlike most other seafood, vary greatly in appearance and taste, depending on where they are harvested. High in iron and rich in vitamins and minerals, they are delicious fried, baked, boiled, steamed or stewed.

Chef Dirt's Oyster Fritters

1 cup bacon fat & 1 cup corn oil (or 2 cups corn oil)
1 green onion, minced
1 cup self-rising cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 egg, slightly beaten
Kernels from 1 ear fresh corn
1/2 pint oysters, drained

Heat fat and oil in a 2-quart saucepan to 375 degrees. Chop drained oysters and combine with flour, cornmeal, salt, egg, corn and green onion. Stir until just mixed. You should be able to form a moist, sticky ball using 2 spoons; if too thin add more flour, if too thick add water. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls into hot oil and cook until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Makes 20 to 24 fritters.

From "Seafood and Things from the Outer Banks" by Chef Dirt, Jerry G. Smith. Cookbooks are $7.95 plus $2 shipping and handling. Call (252) 491-2403 to order, or check out the Web site at www.chaela.com/chefdirt/index.html#order

Baked Oysters

24 select oysters
1/2 cup flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted
6 lemon wedges

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Grease a shallow baking pan with butter or margarine.
2. Mix the flour with the salt and pepper. Drain the oysters, dry them and roll in the flour mixture. Then dip them in the egg and roll in the flour again.
3. Arrange the oysters in the baking dish. Pour the butter or margarine over each oyster. Bake 10 to 15 minutes, or until the oysters are lightly browned, basting twice. Garnish with lemon wedges. Serves 6.

This recipe comes from www.shrimp.com. To order fresh seafood from anywhere in the US, call 1-888-5 Shrimp or check out the Web site.

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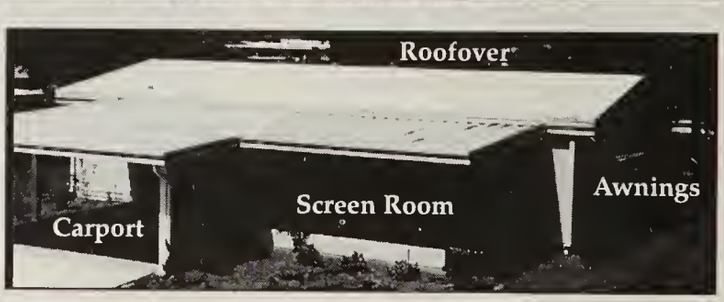

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PX 6113 M 3

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Plus $1.90 Postage and Handling

☐ 2 for only $7.98* *Save $2.00*
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*MI residents add 6% * TN residents add 8.25%
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PY 6113 M 3

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☐ 10 plants - $17.98*
Includes 2 Planters!
Plus $4.90 Postage and Handling

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*MI residents add 6% Sales Tax. * TN residents add 8.25% Sales Tax.
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